

# DMH Satisfaction Survey Results

## Consumer Satisfaction - 2002

### Overview

## Use of Data and Quality Improvement

The methods of data collection, the survey content and the survey results should all be considered in terms of quality improvement. The Missouri Department of Mental Health Satisfaction Survey has been designed as a quality improvement process, not as traditional research.

There are two primary uses of this data. First, this data gives the Missouri Department of Mental Health an expression of the level of satisfaction of the people served by the Department of Mental Health. This report will stimulate important discussion of what this data tells us about how the Department of Mental Health system is operating, as well as ways in which the system can be improved. As issues are identified, methods of making system improvements will be put forward.

Second, this data is designed to support quality improvement processes at the provider level. Through individual agency reports, each provider has a basis upon which to compare the level of satisfaction of the people who receive services at their agency with other providers of their type and the state as a whole. This comparison supports each provider in improving the quality of the services they offer. In addition, each provider can get a clear idea of some of the issues that are important to the people they serve.<sup>1</sup> As providers engage in quality improvement activities, it is important to understand the context of services at each agency when interpreting the meaning of survey results. Differences in the population served at each agency, variations in service provision, and particular cultural characteristics of the community in which services take place, as well as other pertinent characteristics of the service system, must be taken into account as this information is used to improve the quality of services. Agency Reports do not attempt to take into account these variations. Each agency has the responsibility to understand and take into account these local variations in order to make the most of the information.

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<sup>1</sup> The last page of the survey offers people the opportunity to address any issues by writing comments. These hand-written comments were copied and sent back to each agency as received.

# Satisfaction as a Measure of Service Quality

How people feel about services is an important measure of service quality. It is not, however, an outcome<sup>2</sup> measure, and should be viewed as a measure of the process of the delivery of services.

## Development

The 1996 Strategic Plan identified the need for a mechanism for collecting satisfaction feedback from consumers and family members. Development of the Department of Mental Health Satisfaction Survey began in 1997. Content of the survey was established through surveys of providers and through focus groups with consumers. Both the Consumer Satisfaction Work Group and the Department of Mental Health Outcomes Work Group developed the method of distribution and approved the survey format. An internal implementation team finalized details. The soundness of the instrument was established prior to implementation.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the instrument was field tested during the 1998 Mental Health Awareness Day in April at the Capitol building in Jefferson City. Some format changes were made as a result.

## The Survey Instrument

The survey is anonymous. It includes a brief introduction, a voluntary demographics section, eight questions on services, eight questions on quality of life and three open-ended questions. The survey is short to encourage people to take the time to complete it (see the sample version of the survey in Section II). Several slightly different versions were used so that satisfaction with different service types could be measured (see the graphic in Section II). Surveys were coded to indicate from which agency the survey originated.

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<sup>2</sup> The Missouri Department of Mental Health has defined an outcome as the measurable result of services in the lives of people served.

<sup>3</sup> See Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Christine Rinck, Ph.D. and Ann Dey, Ph.D., University of Missouri-Kansas City, Institute for Human Development, June 30, 1997.

# Implementation

A simple method of implementation was selected. The survey was offered to all people receiving services from the Divisions of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Comprehensive Psychiatric Services during the month of April 2002. A random sample of individuals who received services from the Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) received the opportunity to respond to a consumer satisfaction interview. Surveys were mailed to their families. During 2002 consumers in in-patient services were offered the chance to respond to a satisfaction survey of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services.

## Distribution

The survey was distributed during April of 2002 through the community service providers of the divisions of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Comprehensive Psychiatric Services. Providers gave each person receiving services during April a copy of the survey in an addressed, post-paid envelope. People completed the survey and mailed it to the University of Missouri - Kansas City<sup>4</sup> or returned it in the sealed envelope to agency staff for mailing. Rather than forcing a difficult process of tracking people across multiple programs to ensure that only one survey was given to each person, people receiving services from more than one program or agency were offered a survey for each program from which they received services. One section of the survey asked if the respondent had answered a similar survey. This method allowed the individual the opportunity to comment on each service component of an agency. A random group of individuals served by the Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities were interviewed.

While this method may not have achieved a sufficient sample size to represent the opinions of all people who receive services from each provider, the survey has provided people with an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns. Giving the people who receive Missouri Department of Mental Health services a quick and simple way to express opinions and concerns about service quality is a major aim of this process.

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<sup>4</sup> The Missouri Department of Mental Health contracted with the University of Missouri - Kansas City, Institute for Human Development for this project.